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Working/Mother

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Heather D. Rocco is the Supervisor of English Language Arts, Grades 6 - 12 in the School District of the Chathams. She is an active member of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL), the leadership constituent group for the National Council of Teachers of English, and serves as the 2013 Program Chair for CEL's Annual Convention to be held in Boston this November.

Working/Mother

At the daycare you wait
in the chair by the front desk,
kicking your yellow rain boots,
your blonde hair, fine and feathery,
damp from the early morning downpour.

Your father had forgotten your shoes -
the ones I nearly drop
as I thrust them toward you.

“I need you to help me tie them,”
you murmur.
I glance desperately at the clock and the woman behind the desk;
Someone will help you, I say
before I dash back into the rain.

Here,
I say to my students that morning,
Here are my books of poetry.
Here are Yeats and Auden, Pastan and Plath.
Read them and find a poem that makes you feel your heart beat.
They stare at me as if I am an oddity
wandering in their adolescent world of lust
and longing.

That night before bed, I slide my fingers across your chest,
searching for the rhythm of your small heart.
You pull my hand
Closer, closer
As if to forgive me.

- Anne Wessel Dwyer

Anne Wessel Dwyer has been a teacher at Madison High School for eight years. She previously taught at Columbia High School in Maplewood, Wallkill Valley Regional High School, and St. Vincent Academy in Newark. Anne lives with her two sons, Aidan and Hogan, and her husband, Patrick, in South Orange.